

VZCZCXRO3207

PP RUEHBC RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHLH RUEHPW RUEHROV
DE RUEHNE #2102/01 1221248
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 021248Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5322
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6081
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3518
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2028
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4911
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 4562
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 6841
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHHJJPI/PACOM IDHS HONOLULU HI
RHMFISS/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 002102

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [PBTS](#) [MOPS](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: PM HOSTS THIRD JAMMU AND KASHMIR ROUNDTABLE AS
SEPARATISTS BOYCOTT

Classified By: A/PolCouns Atul Keshap, Reason 1.5 (B,D)

11. (C) Summary: Prime Minister Singh chaired a third Roundtable Conference in New Delhi with Kashmiri leaders on April 21st, although separatists from both moderate and hard-line political camps refused to attend. The Prime Minister sat through more than 10 hours of presentations by Kashmiri political leaders. Our interlocutors say the Roundtable provided a forum for some minority views to be heard, including Kashmiri Pandits, who say their concerns are rarely considered in the larger peace talks. The People's Democratic Party and National Conference continued to use the forum for electioneering, with PDP calling for demilitarization. Overall, however, the Conference achieved its most important objective: demonstrating symbolically India's willingness to talk to Kashmiri separatists -- but only on India's terms and only with the rest of the J&K community. End Summary.

Going through the Motions

12. (C) Prime Minister Singh chaired a third Roundtable Conference in New Delhi with Kashmiri leaders on April 21st, sitting through more than 10 hours of speeches by mainstream leaders from across the political spectrum. None of the main separatist factions, however, attended the meeting, arguing that only one-on-one talks with the Prime Minister would be legitimate. Hastily organized to coincide with the anniversary of last year's Roundtable, the meeting came just one day before the track-two Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs on Kashmir was scheduled to take place in India. Wajahat Habibullah, the GOI's Chief Information Commissioner and a close friend of Sonia Gandhi, told A/PolCouns that the Pugwash Conference had to be canceled because the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs "stupidly" refused without public explanation to issue passports to Pakistani track-two leaders -- a not so subtle message that their conference should not steal the spotlight from the Roundtable.

More PDP-Azad Wrangling

¶3. (C) People's Democratic Party leader Mehbooba Mufti said the Roundtable provided an opportunity to press the Prime Minister to withdraw troops from Kashmir, following what she claimed was a zero infiltration level of terrorists into J&K thusfar this year. She said the Kashmiri police forces were carrying out all of the counter-terrorism operations in the Valley now, so it was unnecessary for so many security forces to remain. She said the conflict between her party and Chief Minister Azad remains. Further she claimed that demilitarization was the Prime Minister's initiative, but Chief Minister Azad spoiled it by protesting. Press reports on April 29 say one recommendation that came out of the Roundtable was that the Special Powers Act be revoked, although one group, the Kashmiri Pundits, refused to sign the recommendation.

"Separatist" vs. "Non-electoral"

¶4. (C) Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Yusuf Tarigami, who has negotiated with separatists on behalf of the Congress Party, said there was much discussion during the Roundtable of the April 20th rally welcoming hardline separatist Sayeed Ali Shah Geelani back to Srinagar. He said it was likely that the numbers of participants were inflated because terrorists threatened people if they did not attend. Tarigami said he had argued for the Prime Minister to hold at least one one-on-one discussion with the moderate separatists before elections to give them the credibility they need to

NEW DELHI 00002102 002 OF 002

join the political fray. He suggested that "separatist" was not the right word to discuss these leaders, since only the hardline was arguing for Kashmir to separate from India. Instead, he said, they should be called "non-electoral."

Pessimism about an Early Solution

¶5. (C) Tarigami said overall that everyone believed there was a deal in the works on Kashmir, but that it could not come as fast as some were expecting. People in India needed time to "digest" the issue before discussing it openly. Further, the opposition BJP did not want this deal to happen under Congress' watch, so they would not support any resolution of the Kashmir issue. Further people in India were concerned that Musharraf's position was not that strong, so why make a deal with a failing leader? The rise of extremism on Pakistan's Western border was raising fear in India that Pakistan would once again take on extremist positions.

A Rare Venue for Kashmiri Pundits

¶6. (C) Pannun Kashmir leader Ajay Chrungoo praised the Roundtable for at least allowing his group a rare platform for discussion of their concerns with the Prime Minister. He said it is clear that no one in the conflict is concerned about Kashmiri Pundits because it was too difficult an issue to resolve. He said there were more than 30,000 properties once held by Kashmiri Pundits in the Srinagar Valley that were now lost in the conflict. He said the right of Kashmiri Pundits to return to Kashmir has never really entered into the peace talks. They had no leverage to press their concerns. Further, while his group had not walked out of the Roundtable discussions, they refused to sign the final statement because they could not support the Special Powers Act being revoked while violence remained in the Valley.

Visitor from Pakistan Brings Positive Message

¶7. (C) Former Prime Minister of Pakistani Kashmir Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan's April 28th address to Indian officials has also generated positive Indo-Pak atmospherics. Once a hated figure in India, Qayyum said Kashmiri independence was not possible, and that it was a waste of time and a "mental luxury for some." He called for an end to the armed struggle in Kashmir, and urged Indian leaders to support a general amnesty for former insurgents who remain in Pakistan or in Indian prison so they could join the peace process.

Good Intentions

¶8. (C) Comment: The Roundtable demonstrates India's primary point on the Kashmir dispute -- Kashmiris come from multiple political, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, and separatist leaders in Srinagar do not represent the only legitimate voice of Kashmir. The Roundtable, however, also demonstrated that with that diversity comes an equally large number of viewpoints about the outline of a solution to the conflict, or even which steps need to be taken to reach a resolution. That it even took place is an accomplishment, and shows the PM's continued resolve to find a solution despite the doubts of the security bureaucracy. End Comment.
PYATT